

## **DNA Test In La. Killings Is Said To Have Indicated Attacker's Race**

### **Method tracks genetic ancestry**

By Malcolm Ritter, Associated Press, 6/5/2003

Authorities hunting the Louisiana serial killer started focusing on black men after a DNA test indicated the killer's race, the company that did the test said yesterday. It was apparently the first such use of a test in a criminal investigation. A crime-scene DNA sample was found to have come from "an African-American individual of average skin tone for the African-American group," said Tony Frudakis, chief scientific officer of DNAPrint Genomics Inc. of Sarasota, Fla.

Derrick Todd Lee, who was arrested May 27 in the serial killings of five Louisiana women, is black. Police say a sample of his DNA was taken as part of an unrelated investigation and was then linked to the serial killings.

A spokeswoman for the task force that investigated the serial killings confirmed yesterday that its investigators worked with DNAPrint Genomics but declined to comment further.

DNA specialists said they had never heard of a criminal investigation using a DNA test to determine ancestry. Such tests have not been validated for use by law enforcement agencies, said Phil Danielson of the University of Denver.

Ron Rubocki, director of the University of Nebraska's human DNA identification laboratory, said that he was not familiar with DNAPrint's work, but that the idea of identifying an ancestral mixture from DNA appears feasible, given the differing frequencies of genetic markers among different populations.

He said it is not clear how much the ancestral mix would actually reveal details about a person's appearance.

For the first seven months, authorities said they were looking for a white man, based on a psychological profile and witness accounts. But in March, police said the killer could be of any race.

Frudakis said his company's test result led investigators to follow leads involving blacks, and "that is why the case was solved two months after we ran the test for them" in March.

Frudakis said the test his company performed determines how much of a person's ancestry comes from each of four groups: sub-Saharan African, East Asian, Indo-European, and Native American. It indicated that the ancestry of whoever left the DNA sample from the serial killer investigation was 85 percent sub-Saharan African and 15 percent Native American, he said. From that mix, the company was able to estimate the individual's skin tone, he said.

The technique has been tried on more than 3,000 DNA samples and "we have not confirmed an error," he said.

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